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EDITORIALS

A CALIFORNIA PLAN TO COMBAT STATE MEDICINE—IMPORTANT NOTICE

The European Krankenkassen and Panel Systems.—Continental Europe, with its "krankenkassen," for many years has given the medical professions of the Germanic countries a real and somewhat unpleasant experience with state medicine. In England also, the state "panel system" has given practitioners of that land a somewhat undesirable acquaintanceship with so-called state medicine.

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Present-Day Status of State Medicine in America.—In the United States, up to this time, state medicine has nowhere come into full existence or development. On the other hand, it may be affirmed with considerable truth that there is hardly a commonwealth in the Union which does not show here and there expressions of paternalism in relation to preventive medicine, which can be construed to be nothing else than the beginning signs of state medicine. These American expressions of state medicine have been noted by leading members of the medical profession and much discussion thereon has taken place in medical societies, and many pages in medical journals

have been given to a consideration of the good and bad features in that type of practice.

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California's Experience of a Few Years Ago. In California, only a few years ago, a strenuous fight was made to have the Golden State lead the way for the United States in the institution of state medicine. The hard-fought battle of that day, in which the medical profession was victorious, was won in good part through the active work of an organization which came into existence at that time—the California League for the Conservation of Public Health—and which still carries on through the Better Health Foundation of California.

It is not necessary to recount here the difficulties of that somewhat recent California struggle, but the officers and leaders of the profession of that period, and the members of the profession who were awake to the issues then at stake, remember very vividly how powerful were the interests which at that time sought to launch state medicine in California.

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State Medicine in America Still Has Many Proponents.—Some years have since come and gone. The proponents of state medicine are as active as ever and, because of certain changes in our modern day and rapidly moving civilization, seemingly have more supporters of their cause than ever before.

It would take us too far afield to discuss these many factors in detail. Suffice it to say, that all the hue and cry of "the high cost of medical care," with attendant publicity in newspapers and periodicals and reports of all kinds from different foundations and special committees, only emphasize this one important point: that somehow a state of affairs has come into being in which a very considerable number of lay citizens of the United States are restless at the conditions which are nowadays brought into their lives when illness and injury come to them, and that they would gladly welcome relief from the financial and other burdens associated therewith, be that relief through state medicine or some other means.

While it is true that the financial hardships associated with illness and injury are not due to larger fees demanded by members of the medical profession, but to other causes, such as the cost of modern hospital care which is demanded by the majority of citizens, it cannot be denied that much of the criticism of present-day conditions in this particular problem is leveled at physicians; as if the physicians were the cause of the evils of which complaint is made. It is important, therefore, that the medical profession should correct these erroneous impressions and be diligent in espousing measures that give indication of bringing about more satisfactory conditions.

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Important Announcement to Members of the California Medical Association.—The foregoing remarks are here made as an introduction to the